



Washington
Secretary of State
SAM REED



March 4, 2002

Dear Elementary School Principal:

As the Secretary of State for Washington, I oversee elections in our state. One of the most important aspects of a healthy democracy is strong voter participation. Unfortunately, there is a growing population of youth in our nation that is not registered to vote. I am personally committed to increasing the voting participation of our young people and the most important place to start is in our elementary schools.

Voters Pamphlet Cover Contest

I ask you to encourage your 4th, 5th and 6th grade students to participate in a voters pamphlet cover design contest. The best entry using the theme, "**Take Pride in America and Vote**," will be chosen as the cover for the 2002 Washington State Voters Pamphlet, which will be mailed to over 3 million households this year! Entries must be submitted by May 1, 2002. Entries should be mailed to: Office of the Secretary of State, Voters Pamphlet Cover Contest, P.O. Box 40220, Olympia WA 98504-0220. A registration form is attached to hand out to students.

"Voting is Cool!"

One of the steps I have taken to increase voter awareness in youth is the creation of the "Voting is Cool!" program. This program is geared towards 4th through 6th grade students. Its purpose is to increase interest in democracy. This is done primarily through interactive games and activities on the "Voting is Cool!" website at www.secstate.wa.gov/votingiscool. I encourage you to introduce this website to your students during computer lab time or free time in the classroom. Also, please encourage your students to submit patriotic writings and campaign poster ideas to be displayed on this website. Each student whose work is chosen to be featured on the website will receive an official state seal from my office.

The Curriculum

I am pleased to introduce a curriculum designed for 5th grade students. The curriculum teaches students the importance of voting, how to become a voter, and offers students the chance to vote on some of their favorite things. The curriculum is hands-on, fast-paced, and easy to implement in the classroom. I have personally taught this curriculum to a fifth grade class. One of my favorite activities in the curriculum is the designing of a campaign poster and slogan. The design is a simple, easy-to-use lesson plan format. It can be obtained at the website mentioned above, or through your local County Auditor. It includes handouts, vocabulary word lists, and "Voting is Cool!" stickers for each student. It also addresses many of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements required for civics by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Future plans are currently in place to expand the curriculum for grades Kindergarten through 12th.

I look forward to collaborating with you. I truly hope you will enjoy the website and expose your students to the lesson plan and voters pamphlet cover contest. Please share this information with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Reed".

SAM REED
Secretary of State